



Ontario

Niagara

Escarpment

Commission

CARON
TR 80
-Z002

Spring 1979



3 1761 12060698 3



LIBRARY

JUL 10 1979

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

The Niagara Escarpment

The Niagara Escarpment is recognized as one of the world's unique natural wonders.

Essentially, it is a landform—a ridge of rock several hundred feet high in some locations—stretching 725 kilometres (450 miles) from Queenston on the Niagara River to Tobermory at the tip of the Bruce Peninsula. It contains a rich mosaic of forests, farms, recreational areas, wildlife habitats, dramatic scenic views, cliffs, hills, waterfalls, mineral resources, historic and archaeological sites, industrial sites, populated urban centres, villages and hamlets.

Today, in Ontario, the Escarpment contains more than 100 sites of geological significance including some of the best exposures of rocks and fossils of the Silurian and Ordovician Periods (405 to 500 million years old) to be found anywhere in the world.

Escarpment natural areas contain more than 300 species of birds, 53 species of mammals, 36 species of reptiles and amphibians, 90 fish species, and 100 varieties of "special interest flora" including 37 types of wild orchids.

How do we preserve such uniqueness?

This is the basic task of the 17-member Niagara Escarpment Commission—to produce a plan which will maintain the Escarpment and land in its vicinity substantially as a continuous natural environment while at the same time allowing compatible development to proceed wherever possible.



**Ivor McMullin,
Chairman,
Niagara Escarpment Commission**

The Goal

The basic goal of the Niagara Escarpment Commission is defined in the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act.

The Act states that the Commission is to prepare a plan "to provide for the maintenance of the Niagara Escarpment and land in its vicinity substantially as a continuous natural environment and to ensure that only such development occurs as is compatible with that natural environment."

The Objectives

In the preparation of a Provincial Plan for the Niagara Escarpment Area, the Commission is guided essentially by seven objectives as outlined in the Act:

- to protect unique ecologic and historic areas
- to maintain and enhance the quality and character of natural streams and water supplies
- to provide adequate opportunities for outdoor recreation
- to maintain and enhance the open landscape character of the Niagara Escarpment insofar as possible, by such means as compatible farming or forestry and by preserving the natural scenery
- to ensure that all new development is compatible with the purpose of the Act which is to provide for the maintenance of the Niagara Escarpment and land in its vicinity substantially as a continuous natural environment, and to ensure that only such development occurs as is compatible with that natural environment
- to provide for adequate public access to the Niagara Escarpment
- to support municipalities within the Niagara Escarpment Planning Area in their exercise of the planning functions conferred upon them by The Planning Act.

The Commission

The Niagara Escarpment Commission was established in 1973 by the Legislature of Ontario with the passage of the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act.

The Commission consists of 17 members. Nine members, including the Chairman, represent the public-at-large and are appointed by the Province. The other eight Commission members represent county or regional governments in the Planning Area.

The Commission is preparing a plan to provide for the maintenance of the 725-kilometre-long (450-mile) Niagara Escarpment and land in its vicinity substantially as a continuous natural environment and to ensure that only such development occurs as is compatible with that natural environment.

The Commission is required, under the Act, to prepare a plan for all or part of the 5,200-square-kilometre (2,000-square-mile) Planning Area assigned to it by the Province in 1974. The Commission is currently completing a Proposed Plan (Section 10, the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act) for approximately 2,100 square kilometres (800 square miles), however, the exact boundaries of this 'envelope area' will not be firmed up until the Proposed Plan is released in the near future.

In developing a plan, the Commission is assisted by two advisory committees comprised of hunters, hikers, conservationists, developers, aggregate producers, farmers, planners and elected representatives of regions and counties.

The role of the 13-member Interest Groups Advisory Committee and the 19-member Regional and County Advisory Committee is to provide a wide range of "grass roots" input to the plan.

Development Control

Within the Niagara Escarpment Planning Area certain lands have been designated by Regulations as a Development Control Area. The environment of this 2,500-square-kilometre (957-square-mile) area is considered to be especially sensitive and the Commission has been given the authority to regulate development in the interim period until the plan (The Provincial Plan for the Niagara Escarpment Area) is adopted by Cabinet.

What is Development Control?

Development Control is a system of land use control that is distinguished from traditional zoning techniques in that there are no zones, nor are there detailed standards.

Any development or certain types of additions to existing or accessory buildings, unless specifically exempted by Regulations, requires a development permit from the Niagara Escarpment Commission.

Each development proposal is considered on its own merits by the Commission members and is evaluated against the goal and objectives of the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act, taking into consideration the requirements of other government agencies and municipalities.

A development permit must precede, but does not replace, a building or other similar permits.

How Development Control Works

The applicant applies to the Commission on the form provided. The Commission may approve the application as submitted; approve it, subject to whatever conditions may be deemed necessary; or turn it down.

A copy of the decision is then sent to the applicant and all assessed property owners within 120 metres (400 feet) of the land that is the subject of the application. Anyone receiving a copy of the decision may appeal in writing within 14 days to the Minister of Housing.

A hearing officer will then be appointed to conduct a hearing and will report back to the Minister with a summary of the representations made, together with an opinion on the merits of the Commission's decision. The Minister of Housing will then make the final decision on the appeal.

When a development application is not approved, this means that the final decision on the development should await the completion and the approval by Cabinet of the Provincial Plan for the Niagara Escarpment Area.

Information on the exact boundaries of the Development Control Area as defined by Regulations can be obtained at local municipal or Niagara Escarpment Commission offices in Georgetown, Clarksburg or Grimsby.

The Provincial Plan

The Niagara Escarpment Commission is currently completing a Proposed Plan which, when approved by Cabinet, will become the Provincial Plan for the Niagara Escarpment Area.

PRELIMINARY PROPOSALS

Early in 1978, the Commission released for discussion purposes a first draft series of 22 discussion papers called "Preliminary Proposals", for a plan which would cover the 5,200-square-kilometre (2,000-square-mile) Planning Area assigned to the Commission by the Ontario Government in 1974.

After the Preliminary Proposals were released, the Commission held more than 100 meetings with the general public, municipalities, various interest groups and provincial agencies—and received more than 160 detailed submissions in addition to hundreds of letters with suggestions and recommendations from interested citizens.

As a result, the Commission recommended to the Government that a plan should be prepared for a significantly reduced area approximating the Commission's environmentally-sensitive Development Control Area.

The commission has reviewed all briefs and submissions made in connection with the Preliminary Proposals, and it is expected that many of the suggestions and recommendations will be incorporated into the forthcoming Proposed Plan.

Upon release of the Proposed Plan there will be a statutory four-month period for the municipalities and the general public to study the Commission's recommendations on Escarpment protection.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Hearing officers will then hold a series of extensive public hearings to receive further briefs and submissions from all concerned.

Upon completion of the public hearing process, the hearing officers are required to submit, within three months, a summary of the representations made and to submit their reports with recommendations to the Commission and the Provincial Secretary for Resources Development.

The Commission will then submit to the Provincial Secretary the Proposed Plan as amended with recommendations based on the hearing officers' report.

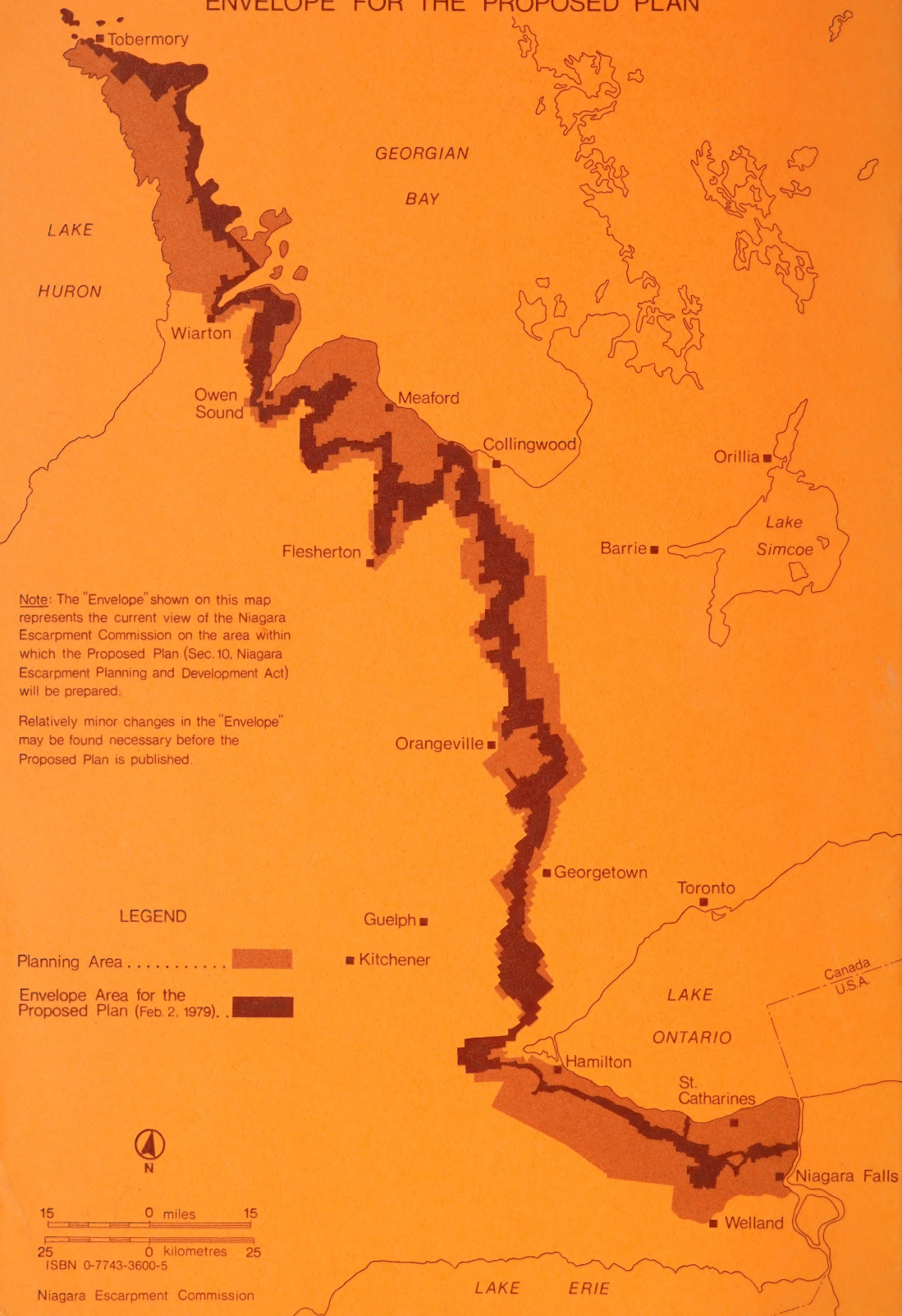
The Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act provides that the Provincial Secretary will submit to Cabinet for approval his recommendations on the Proposed Plan.

If the Provincial Secretary does not accept all the hearing officers' recommendations, public notice shall be given and within 21 days anyone may appeal to Cabinet.

Final approval of the Plan rests with the Provincial Cabinet.

This pamphlet produced by
the Niagara Escarpment Commission
Information Office, 232 Guelph St.,
Georgetown, Ont. L7G 4B1
Phone (416) 877-5191

NIAGARA ESCARPMENT PLANNING AREA AND ENVELOPE FOR THE PROPOSED PLAN



Note: The "Envelope" shown on this map represents the current view of the Niagara Escarpment Commission on the area within which the Proposed Plan (Sec.10, Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act) will be prepared.

Relatively minor changes in the "Envelope" may be found necessary before the Proposed Plan is published.